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Ashley Smith
Name (Print)

Ashley Smith
Signature

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of: BROWN et al.)
Application No.: 10/047,440) Group Art Unit: 1754
Filed: January 14, 2002) Examiner: S. Bos

For: PROCESS FOR PRODUCING NIOBIUM AND TANTALUM COMPOUNDS

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

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Sir:

Prior to examination of the above-identified application on the merits, the applicants respectfully request that the application be amended as follows:

Please amend the above-identified patent application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS

Please add the following new claims.

--36. (New) The calcined tantalum pentoxide powder of claim 20, wherein the BET surface area is from 0.3 m²/g to 3 m²/g.

37. (New) The calcined tantalum pentoxide powder of claim 20, wherein the BET surface area is less than or equal to 0.75 m²/g.

38. (New) The calcined tantalum pentoxide powder of claim 20, wherein the packed bulk density is from greater than 3.0 g/cc to 4 g/cc.